

FACT SHEET

AB 1317 (Assembly Member Block): EGG DONATION: WARNING IN ADVERTISING

Summary: AB 1317 will require a warning in all advertisements for oocyte (egg) donation associated with the delivery of a fertility treatment. The warning would inform patients that there are potential health risks associated with human egg donation and advise consulting with a reproductive health care specialist.

Problem: Over the past two decades, California has become the epicenter of a multi-million dollar global market in human eggs that recruits healthy young women, often college students, as egg providers. The demand for donors continues to exceed the available supply. As a result, the recruiting of young women to donate eggs is becoming increasingly aggressive and financial incentives are steadily rising.

During the treatment, multiple hormones, including those unapproved by the FDA for this purpose are administered, usually over a period of several weeks, to stimulate production of many times the normal number of eggs per cycle in both ovaries simultaneously, followed by surgical removal of the eggs under anesthesia.

Historically, the use of exogenous hormones (DES and HRT) has had disastrous consequences for women's health. In both cases, short-term studies and expert opinion condoning their use proved inadequate while longer-term follow-ups revealed devastating effects that led to eliminating or sharply curtailing their use.

A wide range of less serious, chronic side effects such as severe mood swings, uncontrollable weight gain, migraine headaches and memory loss have also been reported, but not systematically studied. Yet, a recent study finds that "a large and troubling minority (20%) of [egg donors] recently reported that they were **unaware of any possible** physical risks before initiating the first donation cycle" (Kenny and McGowan, *Fertility and Sterility* 2008:10).

Solution: The advertisements required by this bill would cause more women to consult with reproductive health care specialists prior to egg donation, increasing awareness of possible side effects. This would help women to make a more informed decision.

Background: A 2006 Institute of Medicine (IOM) workshop, "Assessing the Medical Risks of Human Oocyte Donation for Stem Cell Research" notes that no registries track the long-term health of egg donors and concludes that "One of the most striking facts about IVF is just how little is known with certainty about long-term health outcomes for women."

The warning contained in AB 1317 would alert potential donors to seek consultation with their reproductive health care specialist.

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